

The Honourable Mr. Justice George A. McGillivray
Royal Commissioner,
Ontario Workmen's Compensation Act Inquiry.

This Brief is presented by the Ontario Osteopathic Association, representing the osteopathic physicians practicing in the Province of Ontario.

We apologize for the late filing of this brief but the first notice this Association had of the work of their Commission was a news report in the press on August 17, 1966, the day following the deadline for filing Briefs.

What is the osteopathic profession? At the end of 1965, the osteopathic profession consisted of 16,743 physicians, all but 193 living in the United States of America. Approximately 12,000 of these are in active practice. In forty of these States the members of the osteopathic profession are fully licensed to practice medicine. There are only 213 osteopathic physicians in the remaining ten States, thus only 1.81% of all the practising osteopathic physicians in the United States are in States where there is any limitation of their practice of medicine. It is estimated that the osteopathic profession is handling the total health needs of between 8% and 10% of the population of the United States of America; equivalent in number to the population of Canada.

The osteopathic physicians in Ontario have had exactly the same education and training as those in the United States, because the osteopathic colleges are all in the United States. Admission to an osteopathic college requires at least three years of university pre-medical education. The medical course in the osteopathic colleges consists of four academic years totalling approximately forty months. This is considerably longer than the period of time spent in a medical course in Ontario, since osteopathy takes nothing away from the teaching or practice of medicine but adds something of great worth to the patient. In fact we have more to teach. 99% of the graduates will complete a twelve month rotating internship before commencing practice. Some will continue their education for another three to five years and be certified in one of the medical specialties.

In the light of the above facts it was impertinent of the Ontario Medical Association to recommend to this Commission as quoted in the Globe & Mail of August 17, 1966 "The OMA recommended that drugless practitioners (such as osteopaths) should not be granted any additional privileges or recognition. These persons lack sufficient medical knowledge to enable them to make a complete assessment of an injured workman, the brief said". On the contrary, because of the osteopathic physician's additional education and training in the field broadly known as Physical Medicine and the fact that



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he has been forced to specialize in this field in Ontario because of the short-sighted inclusion of him under The Drugless Practitioners Act, he is more capable than any other to assess many physical injuries suffered by workmen, particularly in the light of his medically oriented practice.

The Ontario Osteopathic Association therefore submits;-

1. That the workman be allowed to make his own free choice of physician in the first instance, as is presently the policy, but also be allowed to change physicians after a reasonable time by expressing his dissatisfaction with the medical treatment he is receiving to the Board.
2. That the Workmen's Compensation Board encourage workmen who suffer low back injuries or so-called disc problems, to consult osteopathic physicians within a reasonable period of time so that a competent evaluation of the physical structure may be done and, where possible, treatment instituted to normalize the structures offending before the patient reaches the stage where rehabilitation is the only recourse, with its connotations of maintaining an abnormal status quo, but helping the workmen to learn to live more comfortable. It is not suggested at this

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time that osteopathic physicians be employed by the Board's Rehabilitation Centre, for one reason there is a shortage of osteopathic physicians in this Province because of the restrictive practice legislation, and for another, the workman can best be served if he is treated in the osteopath physician's office well before he reaches the stage where rehabilitation is the last resort.

3. That the osteopathic physician be allowed to bill the patient directly and that recompense be made by the Board to the patient. It is strongly recommended that the Board revise the fees paid for osteopathic services by taking into consideration the specialized work involved which is much more time consuming than treatment generally administered to the workman by a medical physician. At present, osteopathic physicians are paid according to a schedule based on the Ontario Medical Association fee schedule. Over the years a number of osteopathic physicians have discontinued subsidizing the Medical Aid Division of the Compensation Board in this way, while others handle Compensation cases as charity work at a reduced fee. The result is that some workmen are being deprived of the medical services they require and employers who are providing

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the funds for these services are not having their
employees receive the competent care they deserve.

All of which is respectfully submitted by the

ONTARIO OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

per;

A. Victor P. Gardiner D.O.

President

The Board for these services are not paying their
expenses because the Government said they were not.



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President

